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on whom, but they also brooded long and suspiciously upon who had supported whom and why, either verbally or with spear in hand. In addition, all the incidents of the battle, in minute detail, were relayed to the rest of the tribe who had not been present, and many of these absentees would discover, among the proceedings, things they did not like or suspicious-looking actions on the part of some of their competitors or putative friends. These they would weave into their own strategies and store up for future use. An elder frequently found some basis for a new grievance against somebody in the events of a battle at which he had not even been present.

Finally, through all these disputes and hostile actions between senior men ran their united suspicion of bachelors. The only "battle" in two years between large groups drawn from distinct bands that had a clear-cut and definite final act was one fought in Rangu in late 1928. On that occasion, after disputing and fighting among themselves from early morning until mid-afternoon, all the old men present from both war parties gradually channeled all their anger toward one unfortunate young Mandiimbula bachelor whom they finally accused of going around from band to band creating misunderstandings between various elders. Several elders on both sides testified publicly that their mistrust of each other had started shortly after the bachelor in question had begun hanging around their households; whereupon the senior warriors of the two opposing armies had no difficulty in deciding that most of their suspicions of each other "were all his fault," and with great unanimity ganged up on the bachelor and quickly clubbed him into unconsciousness for being a troublemaker and a suspicion spreader. In the midst of battle the gerontocracy had reasserted its solidarity by finding a bachelor scapegoat upon whom to unload all their mutual suspicions and aggressions.

Religious Activities

If by religious activities we mean those beliefs and practices which pertain to unseen or supernatural forces, including rituals whose performance somehow affects those forces, then Tiwi religion readily crystallized around three focal points. These were: 1) their elaborate system of day-to-day taboos; 2) the elaborate set of beliefs and rituals pertaining to death; and 3) their complicated initiation ceremonies for young men. Add to these their myths and folklore about creation and their tribal past, and the whole of Tiwi religion has been covered. Space permits only brief mention of these three focal points.

TABOO In earlier chapters we have pointed out several aspects of life in which Tiwi culture diverged sharply from what anthropologists have come to regard as Australian mainland norms and we have suggested that these differences from the mainland are most reasonably to be attributed to either Tiwi isolation or favorable food supply, or some combination of both factors. In their religious life this same line of explanation continues to have validity. To those familiar with the cultures of Australian tribes, perhaps

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once erected on the grave; the names of dead people immediately became *pukimani* on their deaths and could not be used, and the same was true of all the names bestowed by a dead man on the children of his household and all the other words in the language that sounded similar to the name of the dead man.⁴ All ceremonials and rituals were *pukimani* as were the main performers and the armlets, neck ornaments, and other ceremonial objects. People in a *pukimani* state had to observe all sorts of avoidances of and abstentions from everyday actions, particularly with regard to food and sex. Close relatives of dead people could not touch food but had to be fed by nonmourners. That pillar of rigid orthodoxy, Tu'untalumi, was virtually never able to feed himself but was in a *pukimani* state almost the whole year round and needed one of his wives to feed him. (Another advantage of a large household.) Certain spots in the bush or on the banks of streams were *pukimani* places; the dimly seen outline of the Australian coast was *pukimani* as was the ocean near Cape Keith where the Tiwi ancestors had first created the Tiwi world; and finally, the violation of a *pukimani* restriction rendered the violator *pukimani*.

Pukimani as thus applied to people, places, things, names, words, restrictions, and avoidances, meant both sacred and taboo, and was clearly one of that widespread class of words and concepts that is almost standard among the simpler societies. The only noteworthy thing about its Tiwi form is that *pukimani* was a state which people did not actively seek to enter but which happened to people regardless of their wishes. Furthermore, when a man found himself in a state of *pukimani*, his behavior was automatically prescribed for him and for the duration of his *pukimani* condition he observed his avoidances and his abstentions just as automatically as he dropped them when his *pukimani* period expired. When he became *pukimani*, he punctiliously fulfilled the requirements because if he did not, he was likely to be unsuccessful in his enterprises. Big men simply did not dare to be casual about the requirements lest their reputations suffer and they lose face and influence. Less successful men were occasionally explained as probably being secret violators. "His wives and daughters all seem to die young; he must have broken some *pukimani* restrictions sometime" was a reason often given for somebody's failure to be as successful as he might have been. It was noticeable in such explanations of nonsuccess that the failure, or in our terms the bad luck, was attributed to the violation of the taboos, never to the active displeasure of the spirits. The spirits simply did not figure in the picture.

Apart from the big ceremonial occasions, a Tiwi did not have much concern with religion in his everyday life except through some aspect of the *pukimani* system. It was only through *pukimani* that the sacred world impinged upon him at all for most of the year. Since *pukimani* was a condition that could not be actively sought but "just happened" to a person every so often by such common events as the death of a relative, his wife giving birth, or his

⁴ When a man named Tibuki died in 1928, a crisis occurred at the Mission where the natives were supposed to make their requests in pidgin English. How could they now ask for tobacco, since that word was now *pukimani*?

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77] sister's son being initiated, the attitude of a Tiwi toward the whole *pukimani*
 78] state was essentially a passive attitude. *Pukimani* behavior was something one
 accepted and conformed to when required; it was in no way an active attempt
 to change nature, people, food, gods, spirits, or anything else in the universe.

[181] It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that since their *pukimani* system
 offered them no handle by which to seek actively to alter the universe in which
 they lived, the Tiwi found that universe to their liking as it was. Unlike the
 tribes of central Australia who lavished a lot of thought upon magical methods
 of improving the food supply or the rainfall, the Tiwi believed and acted on
 the belief that as long as they observed their *pukimani* taboos, the food would
 continue to be as abundant and the rains as regular as they had always been.

[171] The central Australians, by seeking to coerce nature through magic, suggest
 that they found nature unsatisfactory; the Tiwi, by relying upon passive taboo-
 observance alone, suggest rather that their relationship to nature was an
 acceptable equilibrium that they wanted to preserve, not change. And if every-
 body observed his *pukimani* taboos when required, that equilibrium would
 remain undisturbed. Hence the antisocial man in Tiwi was not the maker of
 individual magic (he was unknown, anyway) but the nonobserver of taboo.
 By his nonobservance he threatened to upset the normally satisfactory equilib-
 [26] rium between man and nature. For a senior Tiwi male to be charged publicly
 with breaking *pukimani* rules was a disgrace and a blow to his prestige and his
 position in public opinion. His behavior was possibly a sin against the spirits
 but it was certainly a shame in the eyes of his fellows. *Pukimani* observance
 was thus a matter of respectability to a much greater degree than it was a
 matter of pleasing the spirits.

765 DEATH As was mentioned above, death is the natural phenomenon
 around which the Tiwi had woven their most elaborate web of ritual. The most
 frequent and most important Tiwi ceremonies were the mourning ceremonies,
 [55] and they came in three sizes—small, medium, and large—depending on the
 [56] age, sex, and importance of the dead person. The mourning ceremonies which
 [56] drew the crowds were not held until some time after the death and burial.

764 All bodies of dead persons were buried within twenty-four hours of their death
 by digging a hole near the camp where the death had occurred and placing
 the body, wrapped in bark, in it. Near most well-used camping spots there
 was already a graveyard marked by old graveposts, and the latest corpse was
 buried there or near there. Seldom was the body carried any distance for burial.
 If a person died even less than a mile from an old burial ground, there was
 little inclination to carry the body that far. He would be buried, instead,
 within perhaps a hundred yards of where he died. This had certain awkward
 repercussions for social organization, since occasionally a person died while
 away from his home district and, being buried where he died, his ceremonies
 were held and his posts erected in a district in which his immediate family
 [5A1] did not live. Young men often used this to validate a change of residence,
 giving as their reason for living in a band territory in which they had not
 grown up, the location there of their father's graveposts.

CHAPTER II

The Creation Period

WHATEVER differences may exist between the Melville Island cultures and those of the mainland, and, in some aspects, those differences are considerable, the creation stories indicate that the two cultures sprang from the same source.¹ 174 773

At the close of the creation period, both on Melville Island and the mainland, the original creators, men and women, were transformed, or transformed themselves, into various creatures, plants, natural forces or heavenly bodies. 771 773 82

Although I would not claim that the list of totems is complete, I feel certain that the aboriginal artists pictured, on the bark paintings, most of the areas created by their mythical forbears. More detailed research may reveal additional totemic places. 532^x 771 82

The list of the thirty-four totemic ancestors illustrated on the bark paintings is curiously unbalanced in its distribution. More than a third of these are trees, almost all eucalypts. The remaining four groups are: the natural forces, creatures of the air, the sea, and one inanimate totem, i.e. red ochre. Neither land animals nor reptiles are referred to in the bark paintings of the totemic places, although they appear in the myths.

These facts contrast strongly with the Central Australian beliefs regarding their totemic creatures (Mountford, 1948, p. 23; Spencer and Gillen, 1899, p. 387), where almost every living thing, particularly the creatures, took some part in the creation of the topography; plant totems are uncommon in Central Australia. 171 771 773 82

The same Central Australian characteristics are also evident in the myths of Groote Eylandt (Mountford, 1956, p. 21), although in the adjacent Arnhem Land, the great creators, i.e., the *Wawalik* Sisters (Warner, 1937, p. 250), and the *Djungkoo* Sisters (Berndt, 1952; Mountford, 1956, p. 267; Warner, 1937, p. 336), made the bulk of the topography, plants and creatures.

Although the Groote Eylandt pantheon, like that of Melville Island, originated as men and women, they were, almost without exception, changed to non-human totems, whereas the great creators of Arnhem Land, the *Wawalik* and the *Djungkoo* Sisters, have always remained human.

¹ Little research has been carried out on the creation stories of the Australian aborigines; Spencer and Gillen (1899, p. 387) giving the most detailed account.

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natural features. At *v*, *v*, etc. (right), are her piles of yellow ochre; at *g* (left), ^{532x} her baskets of red ochre, and at *aa*, *aa* (upper right), the cockle shells in ⁷⁷⁸ which she mixed the colours. These deposits of ochres are still used by ^{302]} aborigines to decorate themselves.

Other natural features created by *Kudjatumpi* are: *u* (lower right), Bonkaitji Creek, on the banks of which she placed many trees as homes for the opossums; *f* (centre) a reef under the water, made from the stones which the mythical woman threw away whilst digging for yams, and the dots on the background, the forests of trees growing on the highlands at Bonkaitji. A hill, *dd* (upper right), is the place where the March-fly woman stood when she created the watercourses, Bailai-intara, *cc*, and Pimaltji, *bb*. The latter is a tributary of Bonkaidji creek.

Pl. 13c, one side of a female *pukamuni* basket (indicated by the square openings), pictures the totemic place of the March-fly woman, at the Kudjatumpi lagoon.

The line of rectangles, *b*, *b*, and *d*, *d*, represents the water in the lagoon; *s*, *s*, *s*, the patches of sand on the bottom; and *c*, *c*, etc., are white cliffs on the adjacent sea-coast. The vertical lines, *f*, and the horizontal lines, *e*, indicate the water running from the Kudjatumpi lagoon over the beach, into the sea.

DISCUSSION

Although this research on the creation period and its related phases must be regarded as incomplete, the data gathered does provide a general picture of the beliefs of the Tiwi in their totemic heroes, and the relationship of those beliefs to the topography of their land. Not being able to visit any of the totemic places, their position on the map (Fig. 1), must also be regarded as approximate. ⁷⁷¹ ● ¹²³

It is to be hoped that, before the Tiwi lose their culture, some ethnologist, ⁰⁰⁰ with ample time, will both fully investigate their remarkable culture and visit each of their totemic localities to collect, in detail, the mythical story of the area and its associated natural features.

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591 while the woman will always be looked upon as belonging to her former
621 horde, the child changes his, taking that of his step-father. Very often
[882] when a boy is aged about 14 or 15 he is taken by his mother's brother
of another horde to live with that horde for some years. Often he is
initiated there and not quite so often he will spend the rest of his life there.
It is no uncommon occurrence for a man to have spent his adolescent
years in two or three different hordes in addition to the one into which he
was born, always under the supervision of one or other of his classificatory
mother's brothers. Two cases at least occurred in the last few years of
young unmarried men who had been reared and initiated in one horde
leaving that horde of their own free will and going to live permanently
in another because they considered they had there more chance of obtaining
a wife.*

On the other hand, a woman will usually be looked upon as belonging
to the same horde all her life, even though she marries young and goes to
live with another horde. To the tribe at large such a woman is for
example a *Tiklanila*, though she has lived with the *Yimipi* ever since her
marriage, and her *Tiklanila* origin will never be forgotten.

As a result of these conflicting customs it is difficult to lay down any
definite rule in regard to membership of the horde. The best generaliza-
tion is perhaps to say that a woman retains all her life a connection with
the horde into which she is born no matter where patrilocal marriage
may lead her, while a man on the other hand belongs to whatever horde he
is living with at the moment, this being normally but not at all invariably
his father's horde.

TOTEMISM

614 The Tiwi have a system of matrilineal totemic clans. Each clan
has a special relation to one or sometimes to two and in two instances
to three species of natural objects. The members of the clan have
a solidarity of their own, helping each other in tribal fights, speaking
of each other as "brother" despite the variation in their actual blood
relationship, and not marrying women of their own totem. There are,
101 however, few of the distinctive features of Australian totemism as known
614 from other parts of the continent. They eat their totem without any
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* It was hardly a logical proceeding as one left the *Tiklanila* for the *Mumupala* and
the other (quite independently) left the *Mumupala* for the *Tiklanila*.

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restriction; they have no ceremonies for the increase of the totem species.

Since the totem of a child is that of its mother it follows that the members of one totemic clan are found in different hordes, and inversely each horde contains persons of several totemic clans. Nevertheless each totem is associated in the minds of the natives with a particular locality or district. This association appears in the myths, there being a number of stories which connect particular natural species with particular localities. Thus each clan may be said to have its ancestral home or centre, but there is little or nothing of any feeling of reverence or ritual attachment to the home of one's totem. Taking it all in all Tiwi totemism does not amount to very much compared with the elaborate forms of totemism found in other parts of Australia.

The word for totem and totemic clan is *pukni*. But the same word means also "sun" and in addition "breath." The connection between these three concepts denoted by one word is not at all apparent.

The totems are grouped into three phratries. The term phratry is here used in the sense of an exogamous group containing a number of clans and not being a moiety. The phratries are unnamed. Should a man want to mention a phratry he will call it by the name of one of the totemic clans composing it. He will generally use the name of his own totem clan if his own phratry is in question, or that of the clan that is powerful in the phratry. Thus the phratry that I am calling Phratry 1, will more often be called *Tjilarui* than anything else because at the present time the *Tjilarui* clan is very numerous and many of them are the kind of people who are usually much in the public eye. For a similar reason Phratry 2 is more often called *Timiririyui* than anything else, and Phratry 3 is usually *Tgkwombui*. There is a much stronger feeling of solidarity with one's clan than with one's phratry, which will perhaps explain that while the clan name is very important there seems no need, or much less need, for any specific name for the phratry.

A complete list of the clans and their totems is given below. Each clan name has three forms, masculine singular, feminine singular, and plural, and these are given in the list in this order.

Clan Name	Totems
Phratry 1.	
(a) <i>Tjilati</i> , <i>Tjilariga</i> , <i>Tjilarui</i>	jaberoo
(b) <i>Ariri</i> , <i>Aruwidina</i> , <i>Arwudui</i>	gallet

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sacred and the ordinary language, with the result that his list of Tiwi clans and their totems is confused and inaccurate.⁴ 179 114 198 614

The Tiwi do not seem to associate very closely the totemic clan and the object that is the totem of the clan. For instance a man of the *Udunui* considers himself as *Udunui*, not as a crocodile, which he normally thinks of as *irungrabai*. The bond of solidarity is between one member of the clan and another rather than between a member of the clan and his totem. 614 771 ●

So much is this the case that it is occasionally difficult to ascertain what is the natural object which gives the clan its name, i.e., what is the totem of the clan. The *Ariggwila* are a case in point. In order to find what natural object was the emblem of this clan recourse had to be had to a few old men of the clan who were apparently the only people in the tribe who knew what natural object was the emblem of the *Ariggwila*. Everyone knew that a number of men, women and children were *Ariggwila*, thought of them and referred to them as *Ariggwila*, but very few members of the community connected them in any way with stones—"any kind of stones"—which according to these old men, are the *Ariggwila* totemic emblem.

With regard to the origin of the totemic clans and their names the natives say that the system of *pukui* was instituted by the old men a very long time ago. One old man said at some time in the distant past "Udunui *nio* *pukui* *kapi* *Primandua*—Udunui is my totem at Primandua," and so everyone knew his totem was *udunui*. Knowing their legends everyone knew the connection between *Udunui* and *Primandua* since it is at this place, a district in Bathurst Island, that *Mumutuni*, the father of all crocodiles, still has his home. Another old man decided upon *mandubani* as his *pukui* because his favourite camping ground was at *Pripanyimili* which has a mythological association with *mandubuka* (the sand fly), such association being founded no doubt on the fact that sand flies breed in great numbers in the mangrove swamps of that region. 773

The *Ariggwila* (the stone totem) are closely associated with a famous rock in *Migu* called *Wurukwompi* which, due no doubt to a hollow interior, gives forth a roll like thunder when beaten with a stick and hence is a sacred object to the natives. The former home of the *Ariggwila* is in the

⁴ *Spencer, Native Tribes of the Northern Territory*, page 200.

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corroboree of the Melville Islanders, but it appears that he regarded the demonstration as hostile. He writes that "the dance consisted chiefly of the performers leaping two or three times successively out of the sea, and then violently moving their legs so as to agitate the water into a foam for some distance around them, all the time shouting loudly and laughing immoderately; then they would run through the water for eight or ten yards and perform again; and this was repeated over and over as long as the dance lasted." [114] 527 535

During none of these ceremonies, or indeed anywhere on the island, did I see anything of totemism in the scientific sense of the word. This fact is in accordance with my observations in Central and North Australia, and my negative evidence is amply borne out by the researches of Dra. W. E. Roth and H. Klaatsch and others. [114] 527

Pastimes.

The sham-fights of youths with small arrow-shaped spears have already been mentioned. Children were observed upon the beach competing in running and long jump. A favourite amusement of the younger folk on a breezy day is to collect the light globular seed-heads of the "spring rolling grass" (*Spinifex Airuntia*), that grow on every sand-hill near the coast, and take them to the beach and there release them on the hardened sand. Driven along by the wind, these seeds travel over the surface at no mean pace. Allowing them to gain a fair start, the children bolt after them and endeavour to overtake them and pick them up from the ground while dashing past them at full speed in "cow-boy" fashion. 524

Another game is that of hand-ball. The seeds of the zamia (*Cycas media*) take the place of a small ball. Two lads stand facing one another and hit the seed to and fro with the palms of their hands, after the style of a modern game of tennis.

Despite their keenness of sight and quickness of hand, they are, nevertheless, very backward in catching with their hands an object which is thrown at them. [114] 527

Burial Method.

The aborigines of Bathurst and Melville Islands have a unique and elaborate method of burial; graves have been found on both islands. It appears that the favourite places for burying the dead are there, where a jungle or mangrove-thicket breaks to the ordinary eucalypt-woodland, usually near to the sea-coast or to a native water. 764

Historically we have to note several observations in this connection.

Sir Gordon Bremer¹ mentions having discovered a grave on Bathurst Island in 1824. "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it

¹ *Imperial Parliamentary Paper*, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, London, March 27th, 1843; also in *The Genesis of Queensland*, by H. A. Russell, Sydney, 1886, p. 34.